



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools



Responding to Bereavement and Loss

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Presentation Goals

- I. Discuss why schools' emergency management plans should include responding to bereavement and loss
- II. Illustrate how planning for bereavement and loss connects to the four phases of emergency management (Prevention-Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery)
- III. Explain common cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physical manifestations related to bereavement and loss
- IV. Provide an overview of factors that may impact bereavement
- V. Outline pre-incident actions schools can take
- VI. Outline post-incident actions schools can take
- VII. Offer guidelines on handling seven key issues related to bereavement and loss
- VIII. Highlight outstanding issues
- IX. Conduct a tabletop exercise
- X. Provide resources for further planning





Presentation Goals

- I. Discuss why schools' emergency management plans should include responding to bereavement and loss**





I. Why Schools Should Plan for Bereavement and Loss

Loss is common in the lives of children and youths.

- 5 percent of children experience death of a parent by age 16.^a
- At any given time in the average classroom, there are at least two students who are grieving from the death of a loved one—the most common loss is that of a grandparent or great-grandparent.^b
- From 1999–2006, 116 students were killed in 109 school-associated homicide events.^c
 - Most of these school-associated homicides included gunshot wounds (65 percent), stabbings or cuttings (27 percent), and beatings (12 percent).
 - However, violent deaths at schools accounted for less than 1 percent of the homicides and suicides among children ages 5–18.
- The leading cause of death in youth ages 5–24 is by unintentional injury.^d
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youths ages 10 to 24.^d

^a Mahon, M. M. (1993), “Children’s concept of death and sibling death from trauma,” *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, 8, 335-344

^{2b} Glass, J.C. (1991). Death, loss, and grief: real concerns to young adolescents. *Middle School Journal*. 22. 15-1 seven

^c Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School-associated student homicides-United States, 1992-2006. *MMWR* 2008;5seven(02):33-6. www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5seven02a1.htm

^d 10 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group, 2003 <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/osp/charts.htm>





I. Why Schools Should Plan for Bereavement and Loss (Cont'd.)

- Schools must be prepared for the loss of students, staff, and relatives because in the event of a death of a school member the school community will need to recover in some capacity.
- Although a common occurrence for most, death is often considered a taboo or uncomfortable topic of discussion.
- When unprepared to handle the topic, teachers may not see students' difficulties or feel able to deal with them.
- If prepared, teachers can be a positive source of support.





I. Why Schools Should Plan for Bereavement and Loss (Cont'd.)

- Schools provide a familiar environment.
- Large numbers of students can be served.
- Schools can offer a variety of supportive services, with many trained staff.
- Students coping after a loss can be monitored over time and referrals for more intensive services can be facilitated as needed.
- Certain losses, such as the death of a teacher, can affect an entire class.
- Parents may be more willing to accept bereavement counseling services provided in school settings rather than through community mental health providers because they may perceive school counseling as having less stigma than community-based counseling.





I. Why Schools Should Plan for Bereavement and Loss (Cont'd.)

- Most students will recover from grief, and after a period of adjustment, continue to learn and interact appropriately; however, when not properly supported, negative reactions may be manifested in negative behavior, such as:
 - Decline in school performance and trouble learning new material;
 - Irritability;
 - Withdrawal, anxious or depressed mood; and
 - Increase in risk taking, including substance use, promiscuity, or suicide attempts.





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II. Connection to the Four Phases of Emergency Management

Prevention-Mitigation: Prevention programs can reduce student deaths related to suicide, substance abuse, risky behaviors, etc.

Preparedness: In-service training and preplanning protocols and procedures following student/staff deaths can promote consistency in response and ensure that necessary resources are available and appropriate services provided.

Response: Responding quickly and effectively in coordination with police and other partners can help minimize dissemination of false information pertaining to a death and provide timely support to those in need.

Recovery: Returning to a normal learning environment can be achieved through proper response, ongoing support, and continued assessment of student needs.





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III. Common Manifestations Related to Bereavement and Loss

- Cognitive Manifestations
- Emotional Manifestations
- Behavioral Manifestations
- Physical Manifestations





III. Cognitive Manifestations

- Repeated questions about the loss
- Repeated discussion or storytelling about the loss
- If the loss is a communitywide event, teachers may see increased interest in media coverage (TV, print, internet)
- Trigger reminders of loss or trauma from events or environment or setting
- Trouble understanding leading to misattributions or misperceptions





III. Emotional Manifestations

- Increased worries about the well-being of others
- Worries and fears about other losses
- Grief related to similar losses or prior/concurrent crises
- Range of feelings (sadness, anger, guilt) surrounding the loss may occur simultaneously





III. Behavioral Manifestations

- Changes in school performance
 - Generally decrease, but some children may become wholly school-focused
- Decreased concentration and attention
- Changes in sleep
- Changes in appetite
- Changes in mood (swings)
 - Increased irritability, increased anger outbursts, or temper tantrums
- Changes in activities
- Increased withdrawal





III. Physical Manifestations

Increased physical complaints

- Headaches
- Stomachaches
- Fatigue
- Vague aches and pains





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- IV. Provide an overview of factors that may impact bereavement**





IV. Developmental Factors that Impact Bereavement

Children's reactions may manifest differently based on the children's ages and level of development





IV. Developmental Factors: Preschool to Early Elementary Children

Developmental Considerations:

- Beginnings of concrete reasoning
- Magical thinking

In the Event of Death:

- Belief that death is reversible or temporary (magical thinking: If I wish hard enough I can change what happened.)
- Can come to understand the permanence of death
- Worries linked primarily to concern about only those child knows





IV. Developmental Factors: Preschool to Early Elementary Children (Cont'd.)

Behavior Changes After Loss

- Whiny
- Clingy
- Withdrawn & subdued
- Acting out the loss and surrounding activities in play
- Regressive behaviors (e.g., baby talk, needing more help with daily activities, bed-wetting)





IV. Developmental Factors: Elementary School-aged Children

Developmental Considerations

- Language matures, but children continue to take words literally
 - Misconceptions and misattributions can occur
- Memory and imagination develop
- Understanding of permanency, inevitability, finality, and causality (usually by five to seven years)
- Development of empathy
- Worry begins to expand to those they may not know who are impacted in similar ways





IV. Developmental Factors: Elementary School-aged Children (Cont'd.)

In the Event of Death

- Awareness of the difference between death and temporary separation.
- “Me”-oriented thinking may lead to the notion that it was the child’s words/thoughts that led to the death/loss (e.g., “When I told my sister ‘I wish you were dead,’ did I cause it to occur?”).
- Fantasy and magical perceptions may influence the interpretation of the loss.
- Clichés associated with death (e.g., having the pet “put to sleep”) may be taken very literally.
- Adults may observe events surrounding a death seen in play.





IV. Developmental Factors: Adolescents

Developmental Considerations

- Increased abstract thinking
- Thinking about the future
- Increased feelings of blame and guilt
- Clear understanding of mortality and death
- Personal vulnerability, masked by acting detached from death





IV. Developmental Factors: Adolescents (Cont'd.)

In the Event of Death

- *Biggest Challenge:* Adolescents are striving for independence at a time when adult support is important; therefore, they may be less likely to initiate discussion of loss and feelings surrounding the death.
- High-risk behaviors
 - Absenteeism
 - Substance abuse/alcohol use
 - Promiscuity
 - Reckless driving
- Increased withdrawal and indifference





IV. Developmental Factors: Adolescents (Cont'd.)

In the Event of Death

- Discussions and/or fascination with death and dying
- Concern about the future and their place in it
- Decreased impulse control
- Increased risk for depression and suicide
- Mortality and death understood as natural but remote from their day-to-day life and something that they cannot control
- Often a preoccupation with shaping their own life and denying the possibility of their own death (or their fear of death)





IV. Additional Factors That Impact Bereavement

- Personality of the child
- Existing coping skills
- Student's history of prior school/personal difficulties (e.g., disciplinary problems, special education, previous personal traumatic events)
- Available support systems
- Type of death (illness, accident, trauma, etc.)
- Relationship with the deceased





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- V. **Outline pre-incident actions schools can take**





V. Pre-incident Actions

- Protocols and procedures surrounding the death of a student/staff member should be part of a school's emergency management plan and should be outlined prior to an actual event because:
 - It is difficult to make decisions around sensitive issues during a crisis.
 - Judgment may be impacted by emotion; staff are typically grieving as well.
 - It is difficult to provide training to staff while they too are grieving.
 - Partnerships with community-based agencies to provide supportive services should be made prior to a crisis where they may be needed.





V. Pre-incident Actions (Cont'd.)

- **Partner** with outside mental health agencies, media and law enforcement
- Create **template letters** as part of the school's emergency management plan^a
- Establish **policies**
- Create a **crisis team**
- **Train** appropriate staff
- Establish system for **mass communication** to parents and staff
- Understand **HIPPA** and **FERPA** regulations
- Be aware of various **cultural and religious perspectives** on death and bereavement
- Establish a system for handling **volunteers** and **donations**

^aSample letters for parents, students, and staff can be found at:
<http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/svc/alpha/s/school-crisis/letters-template.htm>





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- VI. **Outline post-incident actions schools can take**





VI. Post-incident Actions

- Verify facts
- Convene the crisis team
- Communicate to staff
- Notify students
- Determine the school schedule
- Support staff
- Support students





VI. Post-incident Actions: Verify Facts

- Verify information about the death of a student or staff member prior to notifying students or staff.
- When appropriate, contact law enforcement.
- Communicate the basic facts in a manner that is developmentally appropriate as information becomes available to help dispel rumors and help children understand and cope.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Convene the Crisis Team

- Many factors need to be assessed in order to determine the type and magnitude of the response needed.
- Typical crisis team members include:
 - School administrator;
 - School counselor/psychologist;
 - Front office staff;
 - Nurse;
 - Transportation representative;
 - Maintenance; and
 - Spokesperson (public information officer).
- Team membership can expand or contract depending upon the nature and intensity of the situation.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Convene the Crisis Team (Cont'd.)

Actions to take place at crisis team meetings

- Communicate concerns about specific students;
- Discuss what supports are needed;
- Gather the deceased student's belongings for the family and have them available at the main office or deliver them to the family; and
- If no other siblings are present in the school, remove the family from any mailing/call lists.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Convene the Crisis Team (Cont'd.)

- The crisis team should assess impact on those in social circles relevant to the deceased:
 - Eyewitnesses;
 - Friends;
 - Siblings and/or extended family members;
 - Teammates;
 - Staff;
 - Classmates;
 - Students or staff with recent losses;
 - Students or staff with history of trauma;
 - Students with suicidal risk; and
 - Other at-risk students.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Convene the Crisis Team (Cont'd.)

- The crisis team should assess the magnitude by considering the following:
 - Where did the death occur?
 - On-campus during school hours or nonschool hours
 - Off-campus during school hours or nonschool hours
 - How popular was the deceased?
 - What was the nature of the death?
 - Accidental sudden (e.g., car crash, fall, etc.)
 - Intentional sudden (e.g., homicide, suicide, etc.)
 - Illness
 - Rapid onset and progression
 - Terminal, slow progression
 - Mass casualty
 - How many school community members were involved?





VI. Post-incident Actions: Convene the Crisis Team (Cont'd.)

- Create a list of students and staff who may be impacted, and ensure a staff member will check in with them.
- Assess the need to arrange for substitute teacher(s) to be available to rotate between classes to allow teachers time to process and regroup if necessary.
- Establish and staff a support room.
- Arrange for supplies that might be needed in support room or other areas throughout the school (water, tissues, stationery, art supplies, snacks, etc.).
- Consider utilizing counselors from other schools or districts.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Convene the Crisis Team (Cont'd.)

- Call in local mental health professionals if magnitude of reaction is anticipated to be great.
- Keep media away from students on campus.
- Consider a parent meeting to disseminate information and offer support .
- Utilize the preestablished single point of contact in the district and/or building for information exchange and media relations.
- Revise template letters created in preplanning for staff as well as letters to send home to parents.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Communicate to Staff

- Inform staff first, if possible, rather than at the same time as students.
- Utilize phone trees for notification outside of school.
- Schedule a staff meeting before school starts:
 - Give staff a chance to ask questions;
 - Be clear on the schedule of events; and
 - Be informed about all they will need to know in order to answer students' questions.
- Inform front office staff of what they can and cannot disclose.
- Consider conducting a follow-up staff meeting after school is dismissed.
- Provide staff with scripts, guidelines, and basic information about possible reactions.
 - Ensures all students receive the same information; and
 - Can be helpful to many adults who might otherwise struggle on what to say.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Notify Students

- Be aware that due to e-mails, cell phones and text messages, many students will likely have heard multiple versions of the incident and by the time of official notification issuance, many rumors will likely be circulating.
- Information should be delivered in small class settings by familiar adults.
- Have a plan to notify students not on campus (due to field trips, outdoor P.E. classes or sports practices, etc.).
- Avoid announcements over the PA system or at large assemblies.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Notify Students (Cont'd.)

Circumstance	Can Share	Should Share	Should Not Share	Cannot Share
Suicide	▪Directory information*		▪Anything about the student ▪Funeral arrangements	▪Circumstances of death ▪Information about grades, friends, course work
Death by Accident <i>(if no violation of the law)</i>	▪Directory information ▪Funeral arrangements*	▪Directory information*	▪Cause of accident (refer to law enforcement) ▪Information about grades, friends, course work	
Perpetrator in a Crime	▪Directory information*		▪Anything about the student ▪Funeral arrangements (if deceased)	▪Details of crime, any subsequent criminal or legal action (refer to law enforcement) ▪Information about grades, friends, course work
Death by Illness or Disease	▪Directory information ▪Funeral arrangements*	▪Directory information*	▪Circumstances of death ▪Information about grades, friends, coursework	
* only after consultation with the family				





VI. Post-incident Actions: Notify Students (Cont'd.)

- Be truthful and direct with students, keeping in mind the developmental level of students.
- Let students know what to expect; layout a timeline of events and school schedule.
- Discourage conversations around the specific details of a violent death.
- Discuss with eyewitnesses the harm in sharing graphic details (e.g., vicarious traumatization).





VI. Post-incident Actions: Determine the School Schedule

- Maintain normalcy and routine as best as possible.
- Avoid canceling school and after-school activities if possible.
- School-based activities may be the best intervention for students.
 - It is best for children to maintain the connection and sense of belonging, safety and security that school-based routines and activities provide.
 - Physical activity and sports can reduce stress symptoms.
- Encourage teachers to postpone exams or major assignments if students are emotionally upset and find alternative ways to complete school work.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Support Staff

- Be cognizant of compassion fatigue.
- Provide resources, such as handouts on self-care for educators available at www.nctsn.org.
- Continue to monitor the need to call in back-up—bring in outside counselors and substitutes to relieve the burden placed on school staff.
- Be aware that loss and trauma are cumulative, and school support staff are often taking care of the needs of the students, staff, parents, and themselves, on top of their regular duties.
- Hold after-school staff meetings in the days to follow to review and evaluate the response.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Support Students

Based on the magnitude assessment conducted by the crisis team, schools may want to designate a support room—a space that students can go to talk with counselors individually and possibly in small groups.

- Both school counselors and community mental health specialists may be utilized in the support room.
- Establish procedures for students leaving class to go to the support room. Decide on the need for passes and the accounting for students who are at the support room beyond one class period.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Support Students (Cont'd.)

Provide grief support groups in school or make referrals to community-based supports

- Inform students that grief is often experienced in waves, and they may begin to feel better but then experience a resurgence of distress.
- Inform students that everyone grieves differently and they should not be offended if others seem less upset.
- Remind them that some people handle grief by acting silly or by joking.
- Assure them that it is OK for them to have fun and enjoy activities—children (and adults) often feel guilty if they experience happiness or joy during a time when they think they should only feel sorrow.
- Work with students to identify their natural support systems as well as helping them choose healthy, safe coping strategies.





VI. Post-incident Actions: Support Students (Cont'd.)

Helpful statements

- “I’m sorry to hear about your brother’s death; how can I help?”
- “I heard that a close family member died last week. I understand it may be hard for you to concentrate; I am willing to work with you during this difficult time about other ways to complete your schoolwork.”

Statements that may hinder

- “At least he had a good life before he died.”
- “I’m sure you will feel better soon.”
- “I know exactly what you’re going through.”





VI. Post-incident Actions: Support Students (Cont'd.)

Types of Responses and Interventions

- Psycho-education—seeks to normalize common reactions by describing physical, emotional, and cognitive changes, which can help to calm distressed students who may otherwise believe that they are the only ones experiencing such symptoms.
- Compassionate presence
- One-on-one counseling
- Support groups
- Referral to outside therapy
- Psychological first aid





VI. Post-incident Actions: Support Students, Cont'd.

Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Teachers can be supportive by learning the principles of PFA:

- **Listen:** Listen and pay attention to how students act; let them tell their stories.
- **Protect:** Support students and provide an environment that is safe and allows them to process.
- **Connect:** Encourage opportunities for students to connect with other students, adults, and the community.
- **Model:** Be aware of how the situation affects you and demonstrate effective coping strategies.
- **Teach:** Talk to your students about “normal reactions” and what they can expect during the grieving process; help them learn coping techniques.

Teachers handouts can be found at: http://www.ready.gov/kids/_downloads/PFA_SchoolCrisis.pdf





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VII. Seven Key Issues Specific to Bereavement and Loss

1. Alternatives to permanent memorials
2. Funerals and memorial services
3. Responding to suicide
4. Media coverage of suicide
5. Key dates related to the death
6. Death when school is not in session
7. Assignments and tests





VII. Key Issue 1: Alternatives to Permanent Memorials

- Temporary memorials, which are removed at a predetermined time that students are informed of (such as after the funeral).
- Service activities that allow students to honor the deceased through prosocial acts.
- Campaign founded on cause of death.
- Cards, letters, and memory books for surviving family (school staff should review material to ensure that content is sensitive and appropriate).





VII. Key Issue 2: Funerals and Memorial Services

- If possible, funeral or memorial services should not be held on school grounds.
- If the school is the only option for a venue, hold the service outside of school hours.
- Consider having counselors in attendance to provide support to students and staff.
- Establish policies that permit students and staff to attend off-campus services held during school hours.





VII. Key Issue 2: Funerals and Memorial Services (Cont'd.)

- Administrators should know the family's wishes in regards to students attending the funeral service. Do they wish for the service to be family only?
- Children should be well informed on what happens at a funeral and what they will see and hear.
- It is important to let the child decide level of participation.
- Children should be accompanied by a parent or trusted adult; support staff from the school should consider being present, especially when adolescents attend without parents.





VII. Key Issue 3: Responding to Suicide

- Clarify information that family wishes to share and information that is already public knowledge.
- Identify children at greatest risk of distress.
- Educate students, parents, and staff on signs and symptoms of suicide and how to obtain help (e.g., hotlines).
- Encourage students to seek help for themselves and peers.
- Discourage students from keeping peer reports of suicidal thoughts, feelings, or planned actions confidential
- Acknowledge the individual who died without glamorizing the means.
- Minimize media coverage.





VII. Key Issue 4: Suicide Media Coverage

News coverage **may promote suicide** if the coverage:

- Presents simplistic explanations for suicide
- Engages in repetitive, ongoing, or excessive reporting of suicide in the news
- Provides sensational coverage
- Reports “how-to” descriptions of suicide
- Presents suicide as a tool for accomplishing certain ends
- Glorifies suicide or persons who commit suicide

News media **may be beneficial** if the coverage:

- Highlights the community’s efforts to address the problem
- Disseminates information on local resources, help and support
- Provides information on how to identify an at-risk person or risk factor





VII. Key Issue 5: Key Dates

- Be cognizant of anniversary dates, but do not dramatize them.
- Watch for reactions around holidays, anniversaries, and/or court trial dates.
- Additional support may be helpful on other dates that may trigger grief, such as graduation or prom.
- Prepare a constructive message for anniversaries.
- Make sure educators and other staff watch for risk behaviors.
- Assess the potential for the impact of an anniversary on a case-by-case basis.
- Involve students, faculty, and the community in the planning of commemorative activities.
- Arrange for additional counselors to be present if you feel it may be helpful.





VII. Key Issue 6: Deaths When School Is Not in Session

- If death occurs when school is not in session (e.g., holiday or summer vacation), utilize a predeveloped plan to notify school community (e.g., e-mail, letters, telephone tree).
- Consider offering school as the site of support services.
- Use media and other methods to communicate available services.
- Repeat notification (and services) when school resumes.





VII. Key Issue 7: Assignments and Tests

- Continue to give assignments, but consider modifying these depending on children's needs.
- Consider exempting the student from tests immediately after a loss or giving the tests less weight.
- Allow students to take the tests in an isolated. area.
- Consider one-on-one time before/after or during a tutorial to reinforce classroom material.





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VIII. Outstanding Issues

- Coaching and working with school administrators and school staff who want to downplay the importance of loss and bereavement or feel unprepared to respond
- Handling memorials and the pressure parents, extended family members, or others may put on administrators to memorialize persons or events
- Developing model practices that are easily understood by staff, students, and parents
- Attempting to satisfy those that want memorials and channeling that energy into appropriate remembrance activities
- Understanding the differences of handling suicides and death/loss by other means
- Anticipating and preplanning for events that may trigger feelings of loss and bereavement or reminders of the death and anniversary dates





VIII. Outstanding Issues (Cont'd.)

- Convincing teachers they can play an important role in helping students understand a situation.
- Helping school personnel to determine a natural transition point from mourning to moving forward and reestablishing the educational routine. (Keep in mind that things may never be the same, however new and productive patterns of operation will be established.)
- Developing relationships with such outside resources as law enforcement, fire departments, mental health agencies, the media, and the clergy to better understand what is required of them and the role they play in a bereavement or loss situation.

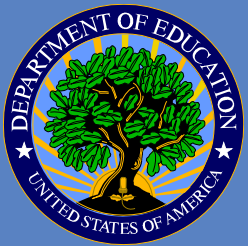




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IX. Tabletop Exercise





IX: Tabletop Exercise

You are a member of your school's crisis team and the team is called together after learning a female high school sophomore was killed in a car crash on Saturday evening.

What further information do you need?





IX: Tabletop Exercise

Some of the information still needed:

- Was it a single car crash or were others involved?
- Was the student driving?
- Were there other passengers?
- Was speed or alcohol a factor?
- Were there eyewitnesses?
- Was the deceased in any clubs or activities?
- Who were the student's friends?
- Does the student have any siblings in school?
- Has the incident been reported by the media yet?
- Has the family been contacted by the school?





IX: Tabletop Exercise

The family has contacted the school and verified the following information:

- The student who died was Melissa, a passenger in the car with her friend Lisa, the driver.
- They met up with other classmates who were in another car.
- As they were driving down the road, John, a fellow student and the driver of the other car, challenged Lisa to a street race.
- As both cars attained speeds of over 80 miles per hour, Lisa lost control of her car. The car left the roadway and struck a power pole, and Melissa was ejected from the car. She suffered severe head injuries and died at the scene.
- Melissa was on the soccer team and was a member of the student council. She had no siblings in school.





IX: Tabletop Exercise

Who might be impacted by this incident?



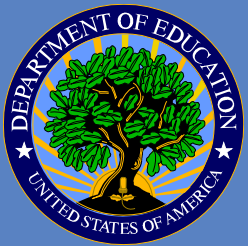


IX: Tabletop Exercise

Some of the people likely to be impacted are:

- John
- Lisa
- The other students in John's car
- Soccer Team
- Student council
- Friends
- Homeroom students
- Classmates
- Coaches
- Teachers
- Parents
- Boyfriend(s) and/or girlfriend(s)
- Students with recent personal losses
- Students with history of trauma
- Other student drivers





IX: Tabletop Exercise

What responses should occur in the following days?





IX: Tabletop Exercise

Some possible responses may include:

- Counseling referral for John, Lisa, and the other eyewitnesses
- “Safe room” available to students
- Individual and/or group grief counseling for appropriate survivor circles
- One-on-one check-ins by counselors with impacted students
- Support for caregivers
- Disseminating information on coping with loss to students and parents (possible parent information session)
- Means for students to express reactions (e.g., journal, cards, art, poetry, etc.)
- Compassionate presence that both staff and students generate
- Counselors available following the funeral/wake





IX: Tabletop Exercise

The students start raising money to pay for a tree and a plaque to be dedicated to Melissa outside the school library.

How might you address the situation?





IX: Tabletop Exercise

A pep rally was previously scheduled to take place in two weeks. Melissa's family wants to begin the rally with an open microphone where students can share their thoughts with the entire student body.

How should this be handled and why?





IX: Tabletop Exercise

It has been a week since Melissa's death, and the safe room is still open since several students keep coming back for additional support.

How might this be addressed?





Presentation Goals

- I. Discuss why schools' emergency management plans should include responding to bereavement and loss
- II. Illustrate how planning for bereavement and loss connects to the four phases of emergency management (Prevention-Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery)
- III. Explain common cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physical manifestations related to bereavement and loss
- IV. Provide an overview of factors that may impact bereavement
- V. Outline pre-incident actions schools can take
- VI. Outline post-incident action steps schools can take
- VII. Offer guidelines on handling seven key issues related to bereavement and loss
- VIII. Highlight outstanding issues
- IX. Conduct a tabletop exercise
- X. **Provide resources for further planning**





X. Resources

National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement

- Has sample letters for staff students and parents, and helpful pdf guidelines and handouts on school crisis and bereavement (<http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/svc/alpha/s/school-crisis/>)

Centers for Disease Control

- Has both facts and data on suicide and contains recommendations to avoid contagion, including information on the media (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/Suicide/default.htm>)

National Association of School Psychologists

- Provides info on practice and observances of death by different cultures and religions (http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/culture_death.aspx)

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

- Provides trauma information for educators and parents (<http://www.nctsnet.org>)

The Dougy Center

- Provides a directory of programs across the country and internationally that serve grieving children, teens and their families (<http://www.dougy.org>)





Presentation Credits

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